4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

much opportunity for a man to assess his sweetheart's domestic efficiency and moral character, but he can get information on these matters from other people who live in her vicinity. When he sees a girl in a distant village where he is staying, he has more leisure to see what she is like and can ask his own hosts about her character. Girls visit in the same way as men, and if a girl is anxious to get a husband and fears she may not find one, she may spend most of her time visiting in different villages hoping to attract a suitable man. There is more time for visiting and flirting at the end of the dry season when there is little work to do in the gardens, but marriages are contracted throughout the year.[5]

Young men say that what they like in a girl is a light skin colour, a pretty face, and the ability to dance and to copulate well. Some men, however, say that such a girl might be all right to run after, but for marriage one would also need to know that she could cook porridge. Women say they like a man who is well dressed, who has a good job working for a European, and who has a parting in his hair. Women sometimes wear medicines which are believed to attract men, and men who have no good clothes may borrow the clothes of others in order to attract women.

3. Sexual partners

The relationship between a man and his wife, at least for the first years of their marriage, is spoken of principally in sexual terms, and the sexual activities of the couple are more closely defined by the marriage bond than are their residence and their economic life. Informants say that the reason for the existence of marriage is either 'the work in the house', a euphemism for copulation, or else 'clothes', that is, so that a woman may have someone to buy clothes for her. It is, however, much easier to improvise alternative solutions to the problem of clothing than it is to find alternative means of sexual satisfaction without coming into conflict with law and morality. Furthermore, while we have seen in the old days that the main emphasis was on the fertility of the woman, this has now shifted, and it is her skill in copulation rather than her success in childbearing that is emphasized. Fertility is still valued, but does not appear to form so important a theme in ceremonial, songs, and gossip as among other societies where the principle of unilinear descent has not broken down, and where, therefore, fertility either of a man's wife or of his sister, is a vital necessity for the maintenance of local structure.

The husband-wife relationship is one in which the man is apparently superordinate to his wife, but we shall see that in practice this superordination is not as clear-cut as might at first appear. It is furthermore a relationship in which there are certain prescribed mutual obligations, so that if these obligations are neglected, it is

[5] Cf. Young and Banda, *Our African Way of Life*, p. 69.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

necessary to take formal action to restore harmony. Husband and wife still remain separate persons, separated socially by their distinct roles. Yet they are bound together by economic ties, by symbolic procedures, and by mystical connexion.

The sexual rights and obligations of husband and wife in each other are not symmetrical. A man has exclusive sexual rights over his wife, but a woman cannot gain exclusive sexual rights over her husband. Her husband can take other wives, or commit adultery, and she has no ground in law for complaint unless at the same time he neglects her. The most she can do is to make life so unpleasant for him that rather than face her anger he decides to sleep with her alone. Mystical procedures are available to both man and wife, and while a husband may use medicines to safeguard that which is his by right, a wife uses medicines to augment her other sanctions, such as the threat of not cooking food for her husband or of running away to her relatives. There is one class of medicines [6] which a man can administer to his wife by cicatrization which it is believed will cause any lover of the woman to die. Another magical procedure is stated to prevent the lover from withdrawing after coitus, so that the adulterous pair will have to reveal themselves to their neighbours in order to gain medical assistance. These medicines are said to be favoured by men going off to Southern Rhodesia without their wives. It is difficult to tell to what extent they are actually administered, but the belief in their efficacy is wide-spread, and people would comment that so-and-so who was ill had become so because he had slept with a woman doctored in this way, and that the scars on such-and-such a woman were made when her husband had given her this sort of medicine. On the other hand a woman may use medicine [7] to prevent her husband from copulating with anyone else, and there are other medicines which act as love charms or which encourage the husband to stay at home at night.[8] The beliefs about difficult labour and *mdulo* [9] also have a stabilizing effect in that the man may fear for the fate of his child and for that reason be faithful to his wife while she is pregnant. On the other hand it is believed that a rejected lover can give medicine [10] to a woman who resists his approaches, so that she will die or have difficulties in childbirth. The only way for a woman to avoid this hazard is to live demurely and not to excite the attention of other men.

If a woman believes that her husband is committing adultery with

[6] Known as *lukankho*. There are at least four varieties of this, associated with different maladies all of which are fatal to the adulterer. Cf. *lukanko* in Colson, *Marriage among the Plateau Tonga* (Rhodes-Livingstone Papers—forthcoming).

[7] *Ndamanga*. See below, p. 56.

[8] E.g., medicine made from the house lizard (*mbololiko*) and the domesticated cat, because these animals are always in the house and do not wander about.

[9] See below, p. 46.

[10] *Kalamatila*, from the name of the species of frog from which it is made.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

837 578 If a women believes that her husband is committing adultery with another woman she endeavours to find out who the woman is. She usually refuses to speak to her when they meet, and if they are forced to come into contact, as at a beer party, there is likely to be a fight between them. A parturient woman may ask her midwife to pretend that there are difficulties in labour so that her husband can be called upon to confess his adultery and name his mistress.

864 The sexual aspect of marriage influences the training and experiences of children. The explanation given for moving children from their parents' hut to a dormitory at the age of six or seven is that by then children are 'wise enough' and will talk to their playmates about their parents' sexual activities in the hut. Girls aged [897] five years or so start to imitate the dances of their elders and to join in the dance competitions when girls come from other villages. [533] Many of the songs sung at these dances are concerned with various aspects of sexual relations. At age ten, or sometimes earlier they [535] also begin to practice the most important of the women's erotic dances, *cimwangalala*,[11] which is performed only indoors. At a 881 girl's first menstruation she is secluded for from a few days up to a 864 month, and is tested by women who have borne children to see that she can dance *cimwangalala* and other erotic dances effectively, that she knows the formalities of copulation, and how to behave when she menstruates. Even where the girl is secluded for the full month, and her training is accompanied by a great deal of symbolism and ceremonial, there is little reference to her potential fertility.

864 There is no formal instruction in sexual matters for boys, and there are no erotic dances for them. They learn their sexlore from their older companions in the bush or in the dormitory. The only [831] specific aspect of sexual maturation that appears to receive emphasis is the growth of large testicles, and boys brew themselves medicines to expedite this.

842 830 Both fertility and sexual satisfaction can be facilitated by the use of medicines. There is a well-known medicine for the cure of barrenness, and there are many kinds of aphrodisiacs.[12] A girl [864] learns the use of aphrodisiacs from other women in the village, and she is formally taught sexual behaviour by her puberty instructress.[13] The old woman who is in charge of her puberty seclusion, who is 881 sometimes the girl's grandmother, supervises the sexual behaviour 593 of the girl for the first few years of her married life. If, as a bride, she succeeds in forcing her husband to give her a present before she will lie with him, the present must be handed over to the puberty instructress the next morning. Later she may demonstrate her [535] erotic proficiency by dancing[14] in the hut before her husband and her instructress.

[11] Meaning, in Nsenga, 'the thing of you just sleeping' (i.e. copulating).
[12] Such as *mtololo*, a root, and *hajalajala*, a plant.
[13] *Mphungu*.
[14] The dance is called *cikapa*. Cf. Nyanja *kapakapa*, swinging backwards and forwards.

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

595 polygyny, and punish their members who take additional wives,
794 there are still a number of Christian polygynists who for most purposes align themselves with the Christian group.

As in the old days, the wives of a polygynist are ranked in the
595 chronological order of marriage, the first wife married being the
178 great wife. If, however, bridewealth has been paid, the wives married
[583] in this way are all senior to those who are married without it. The arrangement by which a barren or aged wife was given a linked co-wife (*nshanzi*) has now almost disappeared. A young girl may still be indicated as a linked co-wife designate at the gall bladder ceremony of her kinswoman and the intestines placed round her neck, but this is now a mere ceremonial, and the girl marries elsewhere when she grows up. As mentioned above a chief negotiated recently for a linked co-wife on the strength of bridewealth paid by his father, but with no success.

593 A man makes his headquarters in his great wife's hut, and keeps
595 his possessions and money in it. During the day it is considered proper that he should sit and chat or entertain visitors on the verandah of her hut. Her hut is likely to be of better design than those of her co-wives, and she is more likely than they to have a separate kitchen. When her husband returns from a journey, he ought to go first to her hut, and if he has brought back goods from Southern Rhodesia, it is in her house that he stores his loads until he has time to divide them among his wives and relatives. A visitor from afar goes first to the great wife's hut and there asks for the man he is seeking. In her husband's absence it is she who must entertain the visitor. This pattern of precedence is followed to greater or lesser extent despite quarrels between husband and wife, and is not affected by where the husband actually sleeps at night.

Apart from this emphasis on the importance of the great wife, the
595 correct behaviour for a man with many wives is impartiality. He must sleep with each wife in rotation, usually for a week at a time, and must not confide in one wife the secrets of his relationship to another. Relationships between co-wives are sometimes strained, and one may use medicines against the others. The medicine[28]
[830] believed to prevent a man from achieving erection with anyone other than the woman who gives it to him is sometimes used by one wife against another. On the other hand, some co-wives help each other in their gardens and many polygynists' households run smoothly. Each wife has her own hut and her own garden and it is possible for them to arrange their affairs so that they can co-operate or act separately as they find best. If they persistently quarrel
[591] their husband may deem it well for them to live in separate villages, so that for example a man may live virilocally with his great wife and uxorilocally with his second wife, going from one village to the

[28] Possibly known as *ndamanga*. The details of this medicine are not known by many men, and I was unable to question any women on this matter.

833

833 SEXUAL INTERCOURSE--sexual initiation (e.g., age and circumstances of first intercourse for each sex, preferred partner); defloration; times and places considered appropriate for coitus; degree of interest and enjoyment ascribed to and manifested by each sex; initiative in copulation; degree of elaboration of preliminary sex play; preferred, variant, and tabooed postures; accompanying behavior (e.g., biting, urination); frequency and duration of coitus; occurrence of female orgasm; artificial means of augmenting sensation; behavior after coitus (e.g., sexual hygiene); psychic difficulties in coitus; impotence and frigidity (e.g., prevalence, explanation, prevention, treatment); etc. See also:

Defloration rites at marriage 585
Regulation of intercourse under polygamy . . . 595
Contraception 842
Sex training of children 864

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

THE THRESHOLD OF ADULTHOOD (1)

When the boy's voice began to break, and his father or another older man noticed it, the second part of the ritual took place. The father's brother went to a senior man famed in the village as a herbalist and obtained from him several kinds of roots. These were ground and then cooked either in milk or in the cud from a goat's stomach, usually the latter, for the father liked it to be known that he killed a goat for his son. If the mixture was cooked in milk, a fowl was killed, and in either case the boy was given the meat to eat immediately after the mixture to take away the extremely bitter taste. The cooking took place on a small fire by the kraal gate in the presence of the male members of the father's house. The boy was told to dip the tips of his fingers in the mixture as it was bubbling in the pan and to lick them quickly. He was not expected to show that he found the mixture very bitter as well as hot to touch. At intervals the boy had to jump over the fire, hitting his elbows and knees with the palms of his hands. The more often he did this, the less often did he have to dip in the pan because the mixture soon dried up, but he had to continue dipping and licking till there was no liquid left. The senior men watched intently all through this performance because they believed the mixture not only helped physical growth and muscular strength but would prevent impotence. When this ritual was performed for the heir of a chief, it was followed by a war-dance in the cattle kraal and the boy had to take a second dose of medicine in the kraal surrounded by the warriors. In such a case a bull was killed instead of the customary goat, and the contents of its stomach used for mixing the medicine. The meat was eaten by the boy and his father's relatives.

As in the case of the girls, this boy's ritual was an occasion for asserting the authority of the father and his kin over the boy. For him there was however no separating off into another group after this maturing. He continued to live in the dormitory, herd cattle, and go to school as before.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Maravi FR4
Cewa

N 881 182 *The significance of Ngoni puberty ritual*

We now come back to the question of why the Ngoni held to this private ritual for girls and boys at puberty. There were three main reasons. The first was that each Ngoni child belonged to his or her father's house. At this sign of physical maturity, significant for the boy or girl, and for the society, the elders of the house asserted anew their authority over them, performed a brief traditional ritual, and watched during the ritual for evidence of the Ngoni personality traits of courage and physical endurance which they expected to see in young adults. The second reason was that the change at puberty was regarded as marking only one of the stages in the development of growing boys and girls. It is true it had more significance for girls, in that it set the mature girls apart as a separate group. But it was not the prelude to immediate marriage, as the girls' initiation school was among the neighbouring Cewa people; nor was it in old days the prelude for the boys joining the army. The third reason was that the Ngoni did not regard fertility as the major dominant factor in the development of young women, as it undoubtedly was considered among the Cewa. They greatly disliked the ritual and the significance of the Cewa female initiation rites and forbade Ngoni women to have any part in them. Potency among men, on the other hand, was recognized as important both for the individual and for the social group, and impotence, particularly in leading men, was kept secret and hidden from outside knowledge as far as possible. If an Ngoni woman after marriage did not bear children, it was not considered a stigma on her, either individually or socially. The common practice of marrying one of her sisters as a 'substitute', or the very common practice of adoption was resorted to. The latter was alway referred to as 'putting a child into the house of So and so'.

M [881] N [171] N [842] N [833] N [842] [595] [597]

N 881 171 One of the alleged objects of initiation schools among other ethnic groups was to instruct the young initiates in correct

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

833 Sexual intercourse is the critical activity of marriage. Within the marriage bond it is not merely permitted, it is right and proper and positively sanctioned. All intercourse is dangerous, whether marital or not, and indeed it is perhaps the licit social significance of marital intercourse that leads to the attribution of mystical 843 significance. While a woman is pregnant, her husband can and indeed should sleep with her and with her co-wives, for it is not her husband's mere copulation with others that endangers her child, but frivolous and illicit intercourse with the wife of another or with some woman he has no intention of marrying. The moral code supports the social order, and the infant is born live into a righteous and well-regulated family. Otherwise it will not be born, or be born dead. Thus runs the belief.

5. Christian marriage

794 581 We have noted that, whatever were the intentions of the framers of the 1903 Regulations, Christian marriage ceremonies do not now have any legal significance, either in the Administration's courts or in the Native Courts. They are, however, significant in the eyes of the missions concerned, and sanctions are employed to ensure that all Christians are married in church. Marriages usually take place at the mission itself and there is some sort of preparation beforehand to verify that the couple concerned are aware of the religious implications of the marriage. Important people are sometimes married in a village church and the ceremony is attended by many people. These rites, both at the mission and in the village, involve the local groups of Christians and serve to integrate the members. The barriers against marriage outside the sectarian group might under some conditions lead to Christian or even sectarian endogamy but among the Ngoni this has not taken place. If a couple are anxious to marry and cannot by reason of a religious disparity, the pagan will usually join the church and then proceed to marriage as soon as the rules of the denomination permit. After marriage, a number then cease active participation in the affairs of the church, although they usually continue to regard themselves and are regarded as Christians. The fairly rapid growth of Christianity in the last fifty years makes it impossible to tell as yet whether an endogamous community will be formed. In any case, the Christian community stretches like the rest of Ngoni society to the Copperbelt and the towns of Southern Rhodesia, and there are facilities for Christian labour migrants who wish to marry Christian girls in the towns.

799 [597] The missions have attacked polygyny, the inheritance of widows, the ceremony of 'taking up the child', belief in *mdulo* and pre-marital copulation. In addition, the Dutch Reformed Church Mission has opposed the drinking of beer, and in theory but not as yet in practice, payment of bridewealth. The prohibition on the drinking of beer has led to the exchange of gifts of cooked food between the two sides in the various ceremonies of marriage, without making any important difference to their content and meaning. The missions have had

7: Hodgson G-5 (1926) 1933 FR5 Ngoni FR5

10. *Forbidden and Enjoined Unions (Ngoni).*

The Angoni are patrilineal, and in the case of a mixed Ngoni-Chewa marriage the child always takes the clan (*vide infra*, Section IV) of the father, whether bride-price has been paid or not. The children of brother and sister may marry each other, but not the children of two brothers or half-brothers, nor the children of two sisters or half-sisters. As with the Achewa, so also with the Angoni it is no longer considered incestuous to marry someone of the same clan.

11. *Forms of Marriage (Ngoni).*

When an Mngoni wishes to marry, he sends a male friend without a gift to inform the girl's father of his desire. The father calls his wife, male relations and headman to discuss the matter; and, if they agree to the proposal, the friend returns with the news to the prospective bridegroom who, several days later, despatches his *nakhosse* with a present to the *nakhosse* of the girl. There are always two *nakhosse* on each side, neither more nor less. A father is ineligible; and brothers, sister's sons and fellow-villagers are generally chosen, as they are more likely to be at hand if required at any time. The present is only symbolic, and generally takes the form of a goat, though in the case of a wealthy bridegroom it may be a cow or something equally substantial. This part of the procedure is known as *ku-onga*, and as soon as the present has been received by the bride's father, the marriage is valid in law.

A few days later, the groom sends a friend to conduct the girl to his house. She comes with several elder women and other girl friends, but her mother may not join the party. The bridegroom provides for them a feast of beer and meat in commensuration with his wealth. He presents beads to his wife, this ceremony being known as *ku-tenderu*, and sends a cloth (known as *ncheku*) to her mother, after which the women return home on the same day without consummation having been effected.

About a week later, accompanied by a small boy, the man proceeds by night to his father-in-law's house, and is given an empty house, where he sleeps with his wife. He must avoid being seen by any of the villagers, and therefore departs before daylight, going to a neighbouring village for food and rest, and returning on the following night, when the same precautions must be observed.

On the second morning he goes back to his village, and after two or three weeks sends a friend to fetch his wife. This time she comes openly, and sleeps with him for two or three nights in any available hut, after which she returns to her father.

The husband then begins to build her house at his village, and to pay the bride-price. This process is known as *kulowola*, or *kupereka mabeka*. The *mabeka*, or bride-price, may consist of cows, or cash, or other goods; and it varies in value according to the standing of the parties. If the bride is fully grown, payment should be completed within four or five months. Nowadays, however, Ngoni girls are generally married shortly before they reach the age of puberty, and in such cases a year or two may be allowed; but when the husband is unnecessarily dilatory, his father-in-law may oblige him to build a house near his own and to live there until he has fulfilled his contract; and until the bride-price has been paid in full, he cannot expect his wife to reside with him permanently at his own village.

10: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949) 1959
FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni

233 are out at pasture all day under the charge of herdboys, and may be brought in for milking in the early afternoon, later returning to the bush. Alternatively they are not milked until they come in just before sunset to be put in their byres for the night. These activities are
857 organized by the herdboys, who range from five up to about twelve
233 years in age. All the boys in a village take part in herding, whether or not their parents own cattle. A man keeps all his cattle in the village in one byre, although he may also have cattle in other villages under the care of relatives. The boys attach themselves to definite byres, and the senior boy of the group becomes responsible for all the cattle in the byre. He sees that the cattle do not stray into gardens during the season when they may damage the crops, and he checks that all the
[868] cattle return at night. He instructs the younger boys in the art of milking, and supervises the allocation of the milk, which is his perquisite. Cattle from all the byres in the village may be herded together. After the harvest the cattle are often left to wander where they please and the boys occupy themselves in the village or hunting for rabbits until it is time to round up the cattle for milking.

628 There are no definite pastures associated with one village rather
233 than with another, so that the herds from one village may come into
857 contact with those from another. This may lead to fighting between
[541] the two groups of herdboys, and also, if it can be managed, between the bulls of the villages. Boys take pride in the fighting ability of their bulls, and sometimes seek out other herds in order to demonstrate the superior strength of themselves and their animals. It is significant that informants referred always to fights between bulls of different villages, and not of fights between bulls from different byres in the same village, although these do occur.

233 In the past, herding was carried out by older boys, and life as a herd-
833 boy was terminated only by enrolment into a regiment. Inter-village
857 fighting went on partly to demonstrate that the boys concerned were now strong enough to join the army. At the present time boys of twelve and younger are employed on tobacco farms, and many attend school. Some cattle owners have to pay boys to come from other villages to herd their cattle as there are no boys available in the village itself, while others obtain the services of young girls.

Inter-village Relationships

628 Villages are grouped together into counties, under a minor chief,
631 and in some counties there are recognized subdivisions that I shall

834

834 GENERAL SEX RESTRICTIONS--sexual modesty and decorum; ideas of proper behavior between the sexes; sex taboos observed on particular occasions (e.g., before or during ceremonies, war, hunting, or special industrial activities); miscellaneous sex restrictions; etc. See also:

Effect of sexual repression on personality 15
Regulation of sex relations between classes, castes, and ethnic groups. 56
Sex behavior and taboos at menstruation and during pregnancy 84
Euphemisms 195
Modesty in dress 291
Modesty about elimination 514
Modesty in bathing 515
Etiquette 576
Deferred consummation 585
Sex regulation under polygamy 596
Avoidance and joking relationships 602
Punishable sex offenses 684
Word taboos. 784
Asceticism 785
Sex taboos during lactation 853
Training of children in modesty 864

539 726 [834]

village in grass-shelters opposite the kraal gate, and no one was allowed to go to a house or to be with his wife. They said that if a man broke this law the army would be unlucky. Even the Paramount if he still went with the army slept there outside. If the Paramount left for the war, his oldest *induna* left his own village and went to the Paramount's and stayed there till the army came back. In the royal village there was continence and all the people were ordered to control themselves in the villages, until the army left.

When the army went out the old men accompanied it, but after they had spoken words of warning they came back to the village. The chief point in it all was that the young men should have courage, and should help each other if one is wounded or there is any other difficulty, and should obey the leaders. They warned the leaders too to begin the fighting wisely and not on a bad or treacherous place. If a leader did that sort of thing and many were killed a case was brought against him. When the army went out two sections were detached to guard the village. These stayed at home along with the companies of old men. They 'kept the tribe', the Paramount and the old people and the stock. [887]

The approach and attack

When the army went out it marched very slowly, and halts for the night were at short intervals. All the sections kept together as ordered by the war *induna*. In all the sections there were scouts to show the way for the army. In each section one or perhaps two were chosen and were put together to walk ahead and look carefully, and come and report any news, especially when they were in enemy country. When the army rested, the scouts went forward to see if there was any danger near. When the army slept in grass-shelters, one or two sections were sent to guard against danger both in front and rear. The army had provision carriers, that is, those who carried food and the coverings of the old men. These were boys and girls, sometimes women from their houses. These were not sent by the Paramount but each household chose its young people to carry the food. The section of the food carriers had another section to protect them when the enemy were attacked or when they went to meet enemies. [724]

When the army was near the enemy stockade the leader ordered them to sit down and rest before they attacked. At such a time the warriors snuffed or smoked hemp. This hemp-smoking was preferred because it maddened the warriors and gave them hearts without fear in facing the enemy. In the enemy stockade the drums would be beating to show that their enemies were angry, but the army of the Ngoni sat and rested as though there were no enemy. [726]

When the army had rested, the war *induna* and the other *izinduna*, or the leader of this army (for all the armies that went out were put under one man of whom they said, the owner of this army is so and so) scouted to see the difficulties of the stockade and to choose a good place for attack.

When it had been carefully chosen and the *izinduna* had agreed together how the attack should begin, then the leader roused the army and began to dance his own praise-dance. The army responded to him. After

539 the
727 salutation being '*Amehlo amhlope*', 'Eyes are white', or '*Buyani*', 'Return',
[576] along with the clan name. The answer was '*Yebo*' also with the clan name. This was the custom in the houses where there had been no death. The warriors of a village where there had been a death, either in the village or killed in war, took off their equipment on leaving the kraal and went to the house of mourning.

The warriors' sections went to the head villages of their districts to tell the news and show themselves. Those of Ekwendeni there; of Echigodhlweni there; of Elangeni there; of Emcisweni there; but the sections from the villages of the *amakanda* went together first of all to show themselves
539 to the head villages and then went to their own villages. After the army
727 had broken up, those who had killed a man or had helped to kill a man
783 began a purification of four or five days for they were considered to be unclean. After the time of greetings in the village, the elders came with
[824] the bark of certain trees which had been ground or crushed and put it in a frying pan. The frying pan was put on three hearth-stones by the fire, and water poured on. When the water began to boil the men came and began to 'lick the medicine', first one hand and then the other. The first lick they spat out, then they swallowed some, and struck their palms on their knees and on their elbows. They jumped from side to side of the frying pan and as they did so, they said '*Po*'. This was said to drive away the spirits of the enemies whom they had killed because they were afraid that they might come to trouble them in sleep at night.

Very early in the morning they went to the river to wash off the paint, but they still wore the clothes of the men killed. This showed they were
[834] still being purified. They did not live with their wives or touch their children. When they returned from the river they tried to repeat the words they had heard their enemies say. Back in the village they took more of their medicine from the frying pan saying '*Po*'. After that they rubbed themselves all over with lime wash.

On the last day they went to the river again but when they had bathed they burned all they were wearing, or hung them in trees. Only the good things were left: cloth, ivory bracelets, bows and spears. The clothes of the killed they gave to the old people to wear. If water did not take off the paint on their bodies they rubbed on fat from cattle. Then the days of taboo were completed, they were considered to be clean, and could live with their wives and hold their children.

The decoration of heroes

539 After the warriors had been sent to the villages a short time passed,
703 then they were called again together to dance the *ligubo*. On that day bulls
[862] were chosen to be killed for the army. Each section received a bull and it was killed by the hero of the section. While it was being skinned and cooked all the companies were dancing. When the meat was cooked and taken off the fire all the army was busied with eating it, each company by itself. When they had eaten the warriors began to get up one by one to dance and leap before their Paramount. Then the heroes of the sections
[937] were presented with the horns of the bull killed for the section. The horns had had holes bored so that bark-rope could be drawn through and they

2: Read E-5 (1935-1939) 1956
FR5 Ngoni FR5

The *intelezi* was made from the roots of a creeper and a bush which grew on the banks of rivers. These roots were burned over the fire, pounded and mixed with water. The warriors were given some to lick on the tips of their fingers, some was smeared inside their shields, and the rest was beaten in a gourd till it foamed. The 'war doctor' took the tail of a gnu or of a zebra and dipped it in the foam and sprinkled the warriors as they finally passed out of the gateway of the kraal on the campaign. This medicine was for strengthening them and also for making them 'slippery', so that the enemy spears would glide by them and not pierce them, and they could slip between the posts of the enemy stockade. After being sprinkled with the *intelezi* no one could sleep with his wife or any other woman, as he would risk spoiling the effect of the medicine and therefore would be more liable to be killed.

The *inhlenza* was a spear with a barbed hook. The Paramount threw it in front of the army as they stood in the kraal until all the warriors had left. It was then put back in the *indlunkulu* where it was kept in the care of the owner of that hut.

There were thus three functions to be performed, each by one of the war medicines. The *intelezi* was to strengthen and protect individual warriors. The *intonga* was the symbol of their Paramount and their kingdom leading them to war and weakening the enemy. The *inhlenza* was the symbol of invincibility, administered by the Paramount.

There were two stages of assembling in the Paramount's village before a campaign. The first followed the initial summons to mobilize, when the local companies (*mabandla*) marched into the kraal, sorted themselves into age regiments (*mabuto*) and sang their regimental songs. Then followed the *ligubo*, the war-dance, when the warriors wore their full war-dress, and the women joined in. There was no individual dancing but a working up of corporate feeling through the dancing and songs. The Ngoni used no drums in their music, relying on achieving rhythm and unison by the stamping of their feet and their singing. After this dance the warriors left for their villages, while at the Paramount's village preparation was made for food and snuff for the campaign. Hard cakes of roasted bullrush millet, kaffir-corn and groundnuts pounded together, and dried meat, were the main supplies carried. At the second summons the warriors returned in their companies with their carriers. These carriers, who were usually young boys, carried the war-dresses and ornaments wrapped in a mat, and the food supplies.

Since on this final meeting depended much of the ultimate success of the campaign, only the warriors and the senior men were present, and all women and young children were excluded from the kraal. After the objectives of the fighting had been explained the warriors were addressed by the old men and exhorted to be brave and to help their comrades, and then the final medication by the 'war doctor' took place. The separation of the army from the civil population was complete until their return

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

606 handle them, as well as how to conform to required behaviour. So she put up with present restrictions for the sake of future peace and harmony. Her lot was to live there with her husband's people, and the birth of the child was a strong link in the chain which bound her to them. Meantime she [572] found some relief in her friends among the other young wives, and particularly with the one in whom she placed her confidence, and who acted as her go-between with her mother-in-law.

Wife to husband

593 Throughout the intricate and often vexing relations with her mother-in-law and other senior women, the husband-wife relationship remained for the young mother a steadying and constant factor. She had been attracted to him in courtship; [58] she had had the chance of accepting or refusing him when the marriage proposals were made; the cattle had been handed over to her father to seal the marriage contract. For all these and other reasons she held on to her love for her husband and her relationship with him, whatever overbearing behaviour might be shown her by his relatives. Hence she took care of his possessions in the hut they shared, helping the senior women to send them out of the hut just before the confinement. She redirected food towards him when it was sent to her during her confinement, gladly going short herself in order to prove her devotion. She was glad that after coming out of the hut, having a nurse girl meant that she could keep her body and her clothes clean and sweet-smelling and therefore pleasing to him. She was happy when the ritual cleansing of the hut and of herself made it possible for her to cook for her husband again and endear him to her by that means. When weaning the child caused her pain and frustration, there was at the same time a deep satisfaction that full intercourse was now officially permitted [834] between her and her husband, and that they were free to have another child.

3: Read E-5 (1935-1939)1960
FR5 Ngoni FR5

of dust, and many of them began to suffer from sores, itch and sore eyes. The girls however, had already begun to like a clean and shining skin for the sake of being beautiful, and their ablutions were no longer under duress.

The smallest children urinated and defecated wherever they happened to be. From the age of three or four, however, they were taught to tell someone if they wanted to defecate, and taken outside the hut. Maize cobs or soft leaves or grass were used to clean the child, and then thrown on the fire. When the child began to look after himself, he was shown how to use the left hand only when cleaning himself, and told it was 'the hand of shame, only used for bad things'. From the age of four or five small girls and boys went with their mothers and the other women to the section of the surrounding bush reserved for the women's toilet. At about the same age boys and girls were taught to withdraw from the public gaze when urinating, and to conceal themselves behind a hut or in some other hiding-place. The Ngoni were extremely prudish about all physical acts connected with evacuating or sex, and began to demand correct behaviour from children at an early age.

If a child was constipated, or had diarrhoea, or was vomiting, or had a fever or stomach-ache, the nurse girl reported it to his mother who went to tell the child's paternal grandmother. For all the range of usual childish ailments the grandmother prescribed and carried out standard treatments, such as whey used as a purgative, or very thin gruel to check diarrhoea. The Ngoni women had a number of herbal remedies which they used for themselves and their children. They also used hot poultices, cupping, and forms of massage. Only when the known household remedies failed, did the grandmother tell the child's father and he, as we have seen, took the responsibility for calling in 'specialists'.

Sleep, the little child's third major need, was sometimes well ordered and sometimes erratic. It was not considered proper for children to sleep in the same hut as their parents

4: Barnes E-5 (1946-1949)1951 FR5 Ngoni FR5
Mpezeni
Maravi FR4

to the kin of the married couple however much the kin may intervene in the marriage and act on behalf of the couple.

The belief in the occurrence of such diseases as *mdulo* and *lugola* supports the values of Ngoni society, and acts as a check on behaviour which is wrong in Ngoni eyes. Beliefs in the efficacy of medicines do not have such a straightforward moral connotation, for in theory it is as easy for a man to harm the wife of someone else by the use of medicines, or for a woman to harm her co-wife, as it is for a man to harm his cuckold. Medicines can, therefore, be used for good or ill, depending on the intentions of those who manipulate them. Even the possibility of anti-social manipulation of medicines can, however, have a positive effect, as we have seen in the way in which a wife is encouraged to live demurely without attracting the attention of other men, lest when she spurns their advances they retaliate with medicines to harm her in childbirth. Old people like to maintain that in 'the time of peace' the Ngoni did not use medicines at all, although from what we know of the Zulu and other South-Eastern Bantu tribes from which the Ngoni came, this is almost certainly untrue. 'Our spears were our medicines', they say, meaning that when the state was powerful both internally and in relation to their neighbours, law and order and the wishes of the Paramount Chief could be enforced by physical sanctions. Only now, when the chieftainship has lost so much of its former power and men and women can do wrong without fear of punishment in the courts, is it necessary to fall back on mystical processes in an attempt to control other people's behaviour. By contrast the mystical diseases which can only be caught through socially disapproved actions operated at both stages of Ngoni history, although *mdulo* itself, unlike *lugola* and other similar conditions, appears to have been introduced by the Cewa.[8]

To a lesser extent the fear of venereal disease may be said to act as a stabilizing factor, since men admit that they are cautious in running after women on farms, in Fort Jameson and away in the big towns, because they fear syphilis. In the village an infected woman, if she cannot conceal her condition, is shunned by careful men, and a newcomer to the village who starts to flirt with her may be taken aside by an older man and warned of the risk of infection. It is an actionable offence for one partner in a marriage to transmit venereal disease to the other. Venereal disease is, however, commonly believed to be widespread and the fear of it cannot be said to be an efficient deterrent of adultery.

Despite the mystical safeguards and despite the fairly well defined rights *in uxorem*, marriage is not regarded as a permanent bond. There is a maxim 'Never confide in your wife, for tomorrow you may divorce her.' Consanguinity is permanent and unchangeable and a man should confide in a brother rather than in his wife. The

[8] Cf. Read, op. cit. 'The moral code . . .', p. 7.

6:Rattray E,G-5 (ca. 1900) 1907 FR5 Ngoni FR5

Then they kill the goat

and take the liver, and lungs, and stomach, and set them down beside the beer, and cut off some meat from a fore-leg, and roast it, and cut off a piece, and give the head of the *Kuka* hut, and cut another piece, and the chief eats it, and another his old men eat, and then they begin to cut off bits for their children. The rest of the meat is put in a basket, and next morning is cut up.

III. When the propitiation of the spirits is finished the chief tells his headman, "To-day you must cook some relish, and give it to all the people, and finish the ceremony in connection with the exodus." So he (the headman) sleeps with his wife, and in the morning she takes the relish to give to the chief. All persons of lesser importance come and take theirs from the hut, and any one who is at a distance at the time has his put aside. Now the ceremony is over, and the villagers again resume cohabitation with their wives [broken off since the beginning of the ceremony]. One month passes, and then a great quantity of beer is cooked all over the village, and they have a dance that at the new village the ground may become trampled and hard. When some farther time has elapsed, they cook beer, to demolish the huts of the dead, that were left standing at the old village. At the new village, when a man dies, the first one to do so is buried at the old village; when one of the village elders dies, he is buried at the new settlement, and thereafter all who die are buried there.